



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

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BRADENTON BUSINESSMAN ENTERS PLEA TO BANK FRAUD

Tampa, FL - United States Attorney Paul I. Perez today announced that GEORGE D. HERNANDEZ, age 57, pled guilty to one count of bank fraud. He faces a maximum sentence of up to thirty years' imprisonment and a maximum fine of \$1 million. HERNANDEZ was indicted on August 31, 2005. A sentencing date has been set for June 19, 2006.

According to the indictment, plea agreement and testimony in court, HERNANDEZ, the owner/operator of a satellite TV installation company based in Bradenton, Florida, attempted to deposit several counterfeit checks into bank accounts which he held at Southtrust Bank and the Gold Bank. Although the banks discovered the counterfeit nature of the checks before releasing any of the funds to him, HERNANDEZ had exposed Gold Bank to the risk of financial loss of more than \$340,000.00.

The case was investigated by the United States Secret Service and the Manatee County Sheriff's Office. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jay L. Hoffer of the Tampa Division.